

Foreword



A Message from the Commandant of the Marine Corps

These are historical times in which our Marines are serving, and the character of their service rivals that of any preceding generation of Marines. At the forefront, we continue to shoulder a critical portion of the nation's prosecution of the Global War on Terror, with more than 39,000 Marines forward deployed or forward based. The majority of these Marines are in Iraq, each one supporting the cause of freedom.

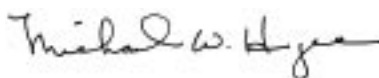
As “soldiers of the sea,” the Marine Corps provides the nation with unparalleled strength and flexibility in dealing with the challenges of today, and ensuring we are prepared for those to come. Readiness remains the hallmark of the Marine Corps, and through the operational concept of Seabasing we are refining a construct for projecting power from the sea – from a Joint force – to any hostile shore around the world. Once ashore, we are experimenting with the concept of Distributed Operations as a means of leveraging the untapped potential of our Marines and the heretofore unrealized utilization of technology to support a force which rapidly disperses and re-aggregates based on information of enemy disposition, intentions, or fleeting opportunities. Prepared to meet any challenge, the Marine Corps remains the nation's premier expeditionary combat force-in-readiness.

Marines are primarily a naval force whose strength is the ability to gain access to denied areas – often from great distances. We fight across the spectrum of conflict and sustain our deployed forces for extended periods of time in support of U.S. Combatant Commanders throughout the world. However, we believe that our future will be characterized primarily by irregular wars. Marines are trained and educated to think independently and act aggressively with speed and initiative. They seek to exploit the advantages of language training and cultural understanding. They thrive on the chaotic and unpredictable environments where our forces are employed. They are committed to and sustained by their families, the American people, and our operational partners. They are devoted to each other and to the cause of freedom. This commitment was witnessed this past year as Marines continued their efforts in the Al Anbar province, overseeing two elections and a referendum creating the first-ever Iraqi constitution.

Every Marine is a rifleman and a warrior – this represents our link to the past and our key to the future. We focus on warfighting excellence in all aspects of Marine Corps training – from boot camp to high-tempo joint and combined exercises. A guiding principle of the Marine Corps is that we fight as combined-arms teams, seamlessly integrating our ground, aviation and logistics forces. We exploit the speed, flexibility, and agility inherent in our combined-arms approach to defeat traditional, terrorist, and emerging threats to our nation's security.

This 2006 edition of Concepts and Programs describes our strategic direction, operational concepts, and those major programs we require to continue the Marine Corps' warfighting excellence and superiority in the 21st century. This book also contains facts and figures on our people, organizations, and resources to foster a better understanding of the Corps and the remarkable Americans who fill its ranks.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Michael W. Hagee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being the most prominent.

Michael W. Hagee
General, U.S. Marine Corps